

Happy Holidays



AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
HERKIMER COUNTY

The
Herkimer Bowling Center
Cares
Happy Holidays
from
Don and Irma

DEDICATION

To the memory of Gerald Church, whose untimely death at the age of 21 will serve as inspiration to those of us who knew him, to work for the remainder of our lives to help the American Cancer Society in its efforts to find cures for the various forms of a dreaded disease.

Introduction

This book, *Happy Holidays*, has been published for the purpose of raising funds to be used by the American Cancer Society, Herkimer County Chapter, to defray expenses incurred while meeting the needs of County cancer patients. Its contents include short stories and poetry, the latter written by elementary and junior high students from St. Francis Parochial School, Herkimer, and Barringer Road Elementary School, Ilion. The artwork in the book was contributed by Associate Professor of Humanities at HCCC, Guy Corriero. The themes of the writings are Thanksgiving or Christmas in nature, and I think the originality of many of the works will impress and in some instances, humor the reader.

I would like to thank the following people for their unselfish efforts in making this book a success; Dolores Cirillo, Guy Corriero, Mohawk Valley Printing and Jim Maher, Joe Fusco, Principal of Barringer Road and the teachers there who coordinated the poetry contest; Sister Rosalie, Principal of St. Francis and the teachers there who coordinated the poetry contest; the HCCC students who solicited advertising contributions; those merchants who either contributed or allowed us to sell the book at their establishments; and Faye Lenarcic, who judged the poetry contest.

God bless you and yours and thank you for reaffirming our faith in the public's ability to rise to an occasion, to personify once again the spirit of giving, so much a part of this nation's tradition. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

RJL

The Saga of Ollie Smith

Ollie Smith, a tall, red-haired boy of ten, heard his mother's voice calling him home for supper.

"I have to go, guys," he said to the dirty-faced group of boys around him.

"Aw, come on Ollie," a lanky youth cried, "stay for just one more play." "Yea, your mother won't mind waiting a few more minutes," another boy chimed in.

Ollie thought to himself, "If I go now we'll lose the game. Yea, Mom won't mind."

"All right guys, I'll stick around for one more play."

The Furnace Street Gang huddled, called a play and then lined up. They were losing to their arch rivals, the King Street Gang, by a score of 56 to 51, and since Ollie was the best football player on his team, he had to stay to the bitter end. Charley Jones, a short, plump lad who was better known as "Four Eyes" because he wore glasses, leaned over the pigskin and hiked it to Ollie. Ollie grabbed the battered ball in midair and began to run for the end zone located at the far end of the vacant lot. Suddenly, he was smothered by a host



of flying bodies, and before he could say "Jackie Robinson" he found himself lying face down in a puddle of muddy water.

"We won, we won!" shouted one of the members of the King Street Gang as Ollie struggled to his feet.

"Ollie, you all right?"

"Yes, I guess so," answered Ollie disappointedly. He had let the gang down, and what was worse, he had ruined his best pair of pants and his shirt was covered with mud. "Boy, am I going to catch it," he thought to himself. He picked up his books and slowly began to climb the hill which led to his house.

"What happened to you, young man?" demanded the brown-haired, petite woman standing in the kitchen.



"I had a little accident, Mom," replied the mass of mud and scratches standing in the hall.

"Ollie Smith, go directly to your room, take off those dirty clothes, take a bath and then, go to bed!"

"Aw, Mom," cried Ollie.

"Don't 'Aw Mom' me," his mother shouted. "Do what you are told and not another word."

"Can't I even eat supper?"

"No, you can't! You'd better thank your lucky stars that your father isn't here. If he were home you wouldn't be getting off so easily."

Ollie turned and went to his room. Tears filled his eyes as he removed his clothes. "Boy, some vacation. Mom didn't even give me a chance to explain. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving Day. Boy, what a joke that is. I've really got a lot to be thankful for; a mean mother and an empty stomach. That's about the size of it. Why, I don't have one thing to be thankful for!"

Ollie took a bath and sadly returned to his room. He put on his pajamas and crawled into bed. "Thanksgiving, that's a laugh," he grumbled to himself. He closed his eyes hoping to fall asleep quickly so he wouldn't have to listen to the growling of his empty stomach.



Ollie Smith opened his eyes and looked about the room. He couldn't believe what he saw. He blinked and looked again. It seemed like his room. The window was where it had always been, but where were the yellow and brown drapes? And the wall, the wall was gray and cracked. What had happened to the brown wallpaper? Ollie was afraid. He sat upright in bed and discovered that instead of his cozy flannel pajamas, he had on a coarse, worn nightshirt. The brightly colored quilt that normally covered his bed had been replaced by a threadbare, cotton blanket.



Something terrible had happened to his room. The pennants were gone and so were the books, desk, lamps and globe. His clothes closet was nearly empty. All that remained was a ragged jacket, a pair of baggy pants, a few old workshirts and a pair of scuffed shoes. Ollie could hardly breathe. Where was he? What had happened? He tried to call for his mother, but the words were so

muffled with fear that Ollie himself could not hear them.

After a while, there appeared in the doorway a thin, stooped figure. Ollie looked and looked. It was his mother, but she had changed so much that he hardly recognized her. Her hair was straight and stringy, her dress old and dirty, and her hands seemed so rough and red.



"Get up, Ollie, and dress for school."

She looked so tired, and her voice was a mere whisper. The tears which had been welling in his eyes now rolled freely down his face. Ollie again tried to speak, but he couldn't utter a word. He was dumb, like a dog or a cat!

Ollie dressed and went downstairs. As he walked, he noticed that the hall was empty. His parents' room was also empty except for an old bed and a wooden table with a dirty, cracked mirror. The stairs were rough boards, and the carpet had disappeared. He was cold. The wind seemed to have come right into the house. What had happened to the radiators?

He entered the kitchen. There, sitting around a table, were his father and brother. His father was dressed in rags and needed a shave, while Willie was so skinny that he resembled a skeleton with clothes on. In one corner of the room Ollie spotted a strange looking object which reminded him of those old stoves he had once seen in the movies. Underneath it was a box filled with wood. The window over the sink was broken, and the back door was covered with old rags to keep out the cold. Ollie sat down at the table, and his mother brought his breakfast. Instead of the usual eggs, toast, bacon, juice and milk, he was given two small, dried sausages and a cup of horrible smelling coffee.



"Come on, Ollie, it's time for school." His brother's voice, like a slap in the face, brought Ollie out of his trance. His mother handed him a heavy, woolen overcoat which was two sizes too large. Then, he found himself walking out of the house with his brother and father. They seemed like strangers.

Outside, the sidewalk and street had disappeared. In their place was a narrow, dirt path which wound down the hill like a great brown snake. The fine houses which had once lined the street were now broken-down, wooden shacks. At the bottom of the hill, the path became a wide, dusty road. Ollie saw other children walking with books under their arms. There was Charley Jones! He wanted to call out to his friend but he couldn't. Charley looked so sad. Why, he didn't even say hello as he passed by.

Suddenly, Ollie saw the people hurry to the side of the road. Then, he heard the sound of a truck. He turned around and saw a vehicle filled with scowling men dressed in black and gray uniforms, holding rifles in their hands. The truck halted in the road and the soldiers jumped out. They rushed up to an old man, grabbed him, and began to beat him with their weapons. Ollie heard his father say to Willie, "Poor Mr. Peters, the government must have learned that he had refused to pay his taxes." Ollie wondered why nobody tried to help old Mr. Peters. The people just stood around with scared looks on their faces. The soldiers picked up the bleeding man and threw him into the back of the truck. Ollie shook his head in disbelief.

At the point where Furnace Street merged with Main Street, Ollie saw a huge, dark, ugly building with a number of chimneys and dirty windows. His father said goodbye and walked into the fac-

tory. What was his father doing in a factory? He was an engineer. The word "was" ran through Ollie's head again and again. Everything that he had known before he woke up this horrible morning was gone. Everything!

Public School 24 looked like a prison. Inside, the school was poorly furnished and smelled funny. The lights in the hall were dim and the lockers were gone. His brother left him and entered a room with number 7 on the door. Ollie didn't know what to do. Finally, a young woman dressed in a dark uniform called him.

"Smith, get into the room. You're late!"

Ollie looked at the woman again and recognized her. She was Miss Reynolds, his teacher. She seemed so mean, and instead of her usual smile, her face was frozen into a frown. Ollie sat down at the only vacant desk. Everything was so quiet. The other kids sat stiffnecked at their desks while Miss Reynolds wrote on the blackboard. Then, suddenly, everyone stood up and sang a strange song about a man named Virgoff. The eyes of those around him were fixed on a flag extending from the wall in a corner of the classroom. "That isn't our flag," thought Ollie. Where was the "Stars and Stripes?" Why didn't Miss Reynolds lead the class in the Pledge of Allegiance?

The rest of the day was a nightmare. Ollie watched in horror as the teacher beat the pupils who couldn't respond to a question and listened in bewilderment as she told the class that there was no God except for General Virgoff, that freedom was an evil word, and that those in the class who spoke out against the government would be sent to the prison and tortured.

Before school ended, Ollie noticed that there

was a calendar on the wall behind the teacher's desk. The date was November 25. Thanksgiving Day! What was everyone doing in school? Today was supposed to be a holiday. Before he could think another thought, he felt the black strap of the teacher strike his back.



"I'll teach you to fall asleep in class," she screamed.

The pain was unbearable and before long, Ollie seemed to be falling down into a black, bottomless pit. He screamed.

"Ollie, what's wrong?" Ollie opened his eyes and found himself staring into the pale-blue eyes of his worried mother. Quickly, he scanned the room. The brown and yellow drapes hung limply from the window. The pennants were on the wall, his pajamas were flannel and Grandma's quilt covered the bed. He could smell the aroma of roasted turkey and, best of all, he could speak. Tears of joy and relief ran down his face as he looked up at his mother.

"Nothing is wrong, Mom. Just a nightmare."

He opened and closed his eyes a few times, trying to make sure that everything he saw was real. When he was absolutely positive, he said, "You know, I've got an awful lot to be thankful for. Happy Thanksgiving, Mom."

His mother smiled, and as she left the room, Ollie jumped out of bed, opened a closet filled with clothes, grabbed a pair of corduroy pants and began to dress for this very important day.





Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving Day is here—
People come from far and near—
To give thanks together.
Some will pray,
Some will play,
Some will dance and sing.
Rosey apples in a dish,
What more can we wish,
On Thanksgiving Day?

Ray Plunkett
Grade Four
St. Francis
Second Prize

Thanksgiving Beginning

People now tell a very old tale,
Of when the Mayflower first set sail.
The Pilgrims landed at Plymouth tired and
weak
To view the new world they had come to
seek.

They were so glad to be finally there,
To see all the gifts God gave them to share.
So they sat down to eat, with their Indian
friends
And gave thanks for the things they hoped
would never end.

Tim Lowell
Grade Four
St. Francis
Second Prize

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is nice.
But with all the mice
They eat all the spice
Off the rice.

Kathleen Crocker
Grade Four
St. Francis

Christmas

Christmas is a happy time of year
When we think of Santa
And his reindeer.

Christmas is a time when I can play
It comes in December,
Not in May.

Chris Carter
Grade Four
St. Francis

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving comes but once a year
With lots of food and plenty of cheer
The family comes to enjoy the feast
To give thanks and pray for peace.

With pumpkin pie; all the fixings
And Poor Mom whose stuck in the kitchen.
The smell of food is through the house
Even tempting a little mouse
Who comes out for a peek
Hoping for something to eat.

Don Jenkins
Grade Five
St. Francis

On Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving we have lots of food
 simmering and a house full of smells,
Later at night we listen to church bells.
I help set the table and help my mother,
But what's hardest of all is I have to be nice
 to my brother.
Sometimes he's nice,
And we play in the snow and ice.
My brother likes meat and eats a lot,
Nearly finished the whole pot.
My father helped him though,
I didn't finish for awhile 'cause
I eat slow.
Now I have to say good-bye,
And finish eating my apple pie.

Mary Beth Button
Grade Five
Barringer Road
First Prize

The Indians and the Pilgrims

John Smith landed on Plymouth Rock

He used the rock for a dock

He went to explore

And found Indians galore.

He went to meet them

But then he had to defeat them.

They finally made good good friends

And the ladies made, for the cabin, some
odds and ends.

They had a feast

And ate a little beast

They called it Thanksgiving

And they were glad they were living.

During the winter

They finished their dinner

Now they're dead

But they died well fed.

Krissy Lennox
Grade Five
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving Day

It's Thanksgiving Day, and the family's all
here,
To drink and to feast in a way of good
cheer,
There's turkey all filled up with stuffing,
just right,
To satisfy anyone's big appetite.

If you get up real early, you can watch the
parade,
While eating your toast spread with orange
marmalade,
Thanksgiving is really a fun, happy day,
To celebrate eating, there's no other way.

We celebrate Thanksgiving, as you know,
To honor our forefathers from long, long
ago;
They left on the Mayflower in sixteen-
twenty
To come to our country the land of plenty.

Now it is time to begin our big feast,
To munch on our yams and bread made of
yeast,
It's a wonderful time, a time of no fear,
It's too bad we have it only once a year.

Robert Garnsey
Grade Five
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving
is the
time when
we eat turkey
that has
warm hot butter
melting on
the top.

And candles
glowing like
fireflies in
the cool
dark
moonlight.

Cindy Metz
Grade Five
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving

At Thanksgiving time there are parades
Costumes and floats have to be made.
They go in and out little streets
It seems like it'll take weeks and weeks
At Thanksgiving time we eat dinner
And the Turkey gets thinner and thinner!
We eat mashed potatoes and other food
And the next day we wake up in a good
mood.

Kevin Joyce
Grade Five
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving Day the air is crisp and
cold

By now the Mayflower must be old
Mothers and Fathers are cooking and rush-
ing

I sit down away from the shoving and
pushing

When we sit down for Grace

My mouth is watering for a taste

Debbie Wright
Grade Five
Barringer Road

On Thanksgiving Morning

I bought a great big turkey
Then I named him Herkey
Then it was Thanksgiving time
I committed a dreadful crime
On Thanksgiving morning.

Glenn Jaquish
Grade Six
Barringer Road

The Fat Turkey

It was November 1st.
Thanksgiving was getting close.
My owner was looking at me.
Would I taste good on toast?

I was very nervous,
'Cause when I first awoke
He was standing over me.
With an axe, I thought I'd choke!

Ron Hagadorn
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving Is To Me

Thanksgiving is to me,
Very dreadful indeed,
For I am the turkey,
And that's not the one to be.

Dad was killed last year,
My Granny the year before,
I know that I'm the next in line,
To them I'm just one more.

Now the day of thanks arrives,
And I am full of fear,
Here comes the farmer with his ax,
My eyes are filled with tears.

He opens my cage and ties me down,
That's the end of me,
Oh wait, have heart, the rope has broke,
I'm good for another year.

James L. Sweeney
Grade Six
Barringer Road

My Thanksgiving Turkey

My Thanksgiving turkey,
Pretty as can be.
Boy do I want a turkey leg,
And a nice big cup of brandy.
Then I'll have some potatoes,
And a lot of gravy,
If only that cup of brandy,
Didn't make every thing so wavy.

Frank Dudish
Grade Six
Barringer Road

My Thanksgiving Turkey

My Thanksgiving turkey all ready to eat,
I can't wait to dig into that meat,
Its nice brown coating is very hot,
For it just came out of that great big pot,
Here I am in front of my plate,
O'boy—I just can't wait!

Linda Fike
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is when you have turkey and
wine.

With your family together you have a fun
time.

On the first Thanksgiving the pilgrims and
Indians

made peace in the land.

They all became brothers when each gave
the other

his hand.

John Seaman
Grade Seven
St. Francis
Second Prize

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a nice time of year
When the leaves are red and yellow.
Some people may think it's queer
But I am not that sort of fellow.
I like Thanksgiving in an unusual way
That most people don't usually think of.
I like Thanksgiving because of its meaning,
The meaning of Thanks and the meaning of
Giving.

Joseph McElwain
Grade Eight
St. Francis
Second Prize

A Thanksgiving Reminder

A popular Thanksgiving hymn begins, "We gather together to ask the Lord's blessing." This Thanksgiving we might do well to ask a blessing on behalf of American Indians, for without their help during the formative years of our history, we might neither be gathering nor asking blessings. The population of both the Virginia and Pilgrim communities during the early 17th century was saved from starvation by Indians who, if they had assumed a more aggressive posture, especially in the former's case, could have destroyed the white invaders thereby altering significantly the course of American history. In the case of the Pilgrims, our ceremony of Thanksgiving is derived directly from the "banquet of thanks" attended by both redmen and white following the bitter winter of 1621-22. The first Thanksgiving was not only a tribute to God for his infinite mercy in seeing his flock through the harsh winter past, but also a tribute to an Indian, Squanto, who according to the noted historian, Alvin Josephy, Jr., was an indispensable factor in the immigrants' survival. Squanto and other Indians throughout the 17th century provided the ever-increasing numbers of whites with new foods. In fact, almost half of the crops grown by man were *first* domesticated by American Indians. Included in the above are corn, potatoes, manioc, the sweet potato, peanuts, tomatoes, pumpkins, peppers, several varieties of beans, squashes and peanuts. Indians also gave us cotton, over fifty varieties of "lifesaving" drugs and, to the delight and/or detriment of millions of Americans, tobacco.

In point of fact, the redman taught our forefathers to plant, hunt and fish "Indian" style, instructed them in the making of implements, tools, and clothing, influenced their style of fight-

ing to the extent that they became more than competitive during the very critical French and Indian War; in short, despite the unfortunate conflicts of interest that erupted between the races, the Indians in the final analysis made the colonists' lives more secure than they otherwise might have been.

Among the Indian devices utilized by Americans over the years are hammocks, kayaks, smoking pipes, toboggans, canoes, moccasins and snowshoes. Our language in respect to words and expressions has been enriched by Native American people as reflected by the following: papoose, chipmunk, pecan, tobacco, wigwam, succotash, moose, skunk, racoon, woodchuck, hickory and opossum; "bury the hatchet", "Indian summer", "warpaint" and "paleface". Indian names grace many cities and villages, rivers, states, mountains and other geographical sites and features across the nation. Our own Mohawk Valley serves as an ideal case in point in regard to the above, with villages (Mohawk, Canajoharie), a river, a county (Oneida), and various streets bearing Indian names.

Some writers have even intimated that the Indian, Iroquois in particular, influenced the development of our government. Our federal concept of government is not that dissimilar from the Iroquois Confederacy (League of Six Nations). Both governments are characterized by a sharing of power between centralized and decentralized bodies, in the Iroquois' case between the Confederacy and individual nations (i.e. Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora), and in our case between the federal government and the various states. The Confederacy was impressive enough to influence Benjamin Franklin's thinking in respect to his famous Al-

bany Plan of Union, offered in 1754 as possible solution to the divisiveness plaguing the colonies at the outbreak of the French and Indian War. In addition, as Josephy states, "the structure of the League had an indirect influence not only in the union of the colonies, but on the government of the U.S. as it was constituted in 1789. In such forms as the methods by which congressional conferees work out bills in compromise sessions, for instance, one may recognize similarities to the ways in which the Iroquois League functioned."

Former Secretary of the Interior, Stuart Udall, in his book *The Quiet Crisis*, pointed to another positive influence on the Indian's part. He stated, "It is ironical that today the conservation movement finds itself turning back to ancient Indian land ideas, to the understanding that we are not outside of nature, but of it."

Along with the idea of living in harmony with nature, the American Indian has provided many movie and T.V. producers, authors (e.g. Cooper and Longfellow), and painters (e.g. Catlin and Remington), with a financially lucrative theme. American folklore has been enriched by several stories gleaned from the Indian's oral tradition, including the tales of "Lover's Leap" and "The Big Dipper".

As I mentioned at the outset, when we gather together this Thanksgiving to ask the Lord's blessing, we might do well to ask a blessing or two on behalf of the 800,000 or so American Indians living in the U.S. today. Lest we forget the vast debt we owe to this continent's first inhabitants, look to your food, villages, rivers, literature, art, government and very land on which you tread—the day-to-day reminders of the contributions Indian people have made to this country.

Peter and the Yule Log

Nestled snugly between the blue waters of Lake Leuween and the ominous heights of Mount Zalorn, Eistadt was one of the many villages situated in the beautiful valleys of the majestic Tyrolean Alps. For the 257 people who lived in and about the village, Eistadt was the center of the universe because, except for a narrow path over the mountain, it was completely isolated from the rest of the world. The people themselves hadn't changed a great deal from their ancestors. Their clothes were homespun and brightly colored and their neat, comfortable homes consisted of only two or three rooms together with a large fireplace and cramped loft. The main occupation of most of Eistadt's inhabitants was farming. From early spring until late autumn, men and the older boys could be seen planting crops and leading the cows to and from the flowery fields which rose high above the valley floor. The women also worked very hard from dawn to dusk. They took care of the house, washed clothes, prepared meals and kept a watchful eye on their mischievous offspring. All in all, the people of Eistadt were proud, happy and closely bound together by century-old traditions.

Pieter Muller rolled over in his bed and gazed at the frosted window in the far corner of the loft. He pulled the heavy blanket over his head, dreading the moment when he would have to leave the warmth of his home and enter the biting cold outside. Below, he could hear his parents quietly talking. The odor of sizzling sausages and coffee filled Pieter's nostrils, and the realization that he was hungry led him out of his bed and into his clothes in what seemed to be a single bound. As he climbed down from the loft, he remembered





that it was December 24th, the day before Christmas. Today was the day he had been awaiting anxiously for what seemed like an eternity; today was the day of the search for the yule log.

Pieter washed hurriedly and combed his thick, blond hair. He quietly took his place at the table and patiently waited for his mother to bring his breakfast. Pieter might have appeared to be calm on the outside, but on the inside he was shaking like the last leaf of autumn struggling to cling to a limb in the face of a fierce winter wind.

The search for the yule log was the most important event of the year for the children of Eistadt. According to an age-old legend, Father Christmas had once filled a hollow log with toys and riches and placed it in the middle of the village on Christmas Eve. On Christmas morning, a boy from a very large and very poor family discovered the log while on his way to search for firewood. He dragged the large piece of wood home thinking that such a fine log would bring warmth to his family for many days. When the boy and his brother raised the log in an effort to place it in the fireplace, they saw, much to their amazement, an assortment of toys, candy and money fall onto the dirt floor. When the log had been emptied, there were gifts enough for all of the children and a small fortune in money for the impoverished parents. The townspeople soon learned of Father Christmas' act of mercy and decided that on every Christmas Eve to come a yule log filled with gifts would be hidden in or near the village. The people believed that the most deserving child, the boy or girl secretly chosen by the spirit of Christmas, would find the log and bring honor and fame to himself and his family. In this way, the traditional search for the yule log was begun.

"Pieter, Pieter, are you awake?" Pieter's father had been talking to him and Pieter hadn't heard a word.

"Leave him alone, Jan," his mother said. "He's probably dreaming of finding the yule log."

"That's right!" his father exclaimed. "Today's the big day, huh Pieter? Why, I can remember the time I nearly found . . ."

"Oh Jan, we've heard that old wife's tale a thousand times already," laughed Mrs. Muller.

Pieter remembered his father telling him of how he had once found the yule log only to have another boy wrest it from his grasp and claim it for himself. Well, thought Pieter, nobody was going to steal the yule log from him. Pieter's confidence was shaken because this was his last chance to take part in the search. He was twelve years old, and only children between the ages of seven and twelve could look for the prized log.

"Pieter, you haven't touched your breakfast."

"I'm sorry, Mother," grumbled Pieter, "but I'm not hungry this morning." He wouldn't admit that he was so nervous he had lost his appetite.

Jan Muller finished his coffee, rose and put on his heavy woolen jacket and warm fur hat. Before he left to tend to his cows, he walked quietly to a wooden rocker standing near the fireplace, bent down and gently kissed the blond-haired, blue-eyed baby girl peacefully sleeping beneath several blankets.

"Hurry up, Pieter. There's work to be done."

Pieter glanced sullenly at his father. He couldn't understand why he had to do chores on this, the day before Christmas. Oh well, at least he could think about possible hiding places for the log while working.

"Here's your coat, Pieter."

He wrapped the hand-knitted scarf tightly around his neck, put on his boots, coat, gloves and hat and went outside. The weather was clear and cold, a perfect day for the search. Through ankle-deep, feathery-light snow, Pieter made his way to the barn.

The village park was alive with excitement as the children from the valley began to gather beneath the snow-topped, noble pines. Precisely at the moment when the church bells pierced the chill air with four lengthy peals, the red-faced burghermaster of Eistadt mounted a wooden podium and announced to all, "The search for the yule log is officially begun. Good luck to all." Before the honorable official could finish his important speech, forty-four young boys and girls began to run in all directions with such abandon that half of them tripped over each other, sprawling head first into snow made slushy by the warm afternoon sun. Despite the confusion, the park was emptied in less than two minutes, and the burghermaster, his duties discharged, walked back to his office.

The Black Forest loomed dark and unfriendly before young Pieter Muller. The children were forbidden to enter the vast congregation of ever-green trees which grew high above the village and pasturelands. It was said that man-eating creatures roamed the depths of the forest, and while this rumor had never been proven, the wooded area was known to harbor wolves, giant bears and a few mountain lions. But Pieter had forgotten about these dangers in the heat of his excitement. Earlier in the day he had decided that the log would be hidden in the least likely of places and what could be a more unlikely place than the Black Forest? Pieter carefully scanned the countryside

below, checking to see if someone else had similar intentions. Satisfied that he hadn't been followed, Pieter began to walk up the snow-covered path which disappeared into the forest. Above, the sky filled with gray, billowy clouds, and a stiff breeze was blowing from the west. A storm was in the making, and it was getting dark.

Pieter followed the path as far as he could. He searched behind every tree and bush. Once, he thought he had found the treasure-filled log only to learn that he had discovered a fallen limb. It was getting colder, and the wind was blowing so hard that it penetrated Pieter's heavy clothing, stinging his body from head to toe. The snow began increasing in intensity, and soon he could see only a few feet in front of him. With darkness rapidly falling, Pieter sadly decided that he'd better give up the search. As he turned to go home, he found the path covered by the swirling snow. The thought that he was lost, that he was easy prey for the forest creatures, made him sick with fear. After the initial shock had worn off, Pieter began walking in the direction that he hoped would lead him out of the forest. He was more frightened than he had ever been before in his young life.

After walking for hours in the furious blizzard, Pieter remained deep in the Black Forest. Cold, tired and hungry, he decided to rest for a while. Directly ahead stood a large fir tree. Pieter crawled under its heavy branches to escape both the bitter cold and blinding snow. He curled up into a ball, pulled his scarf over his face, and closed his eyes. Soon, he was fast asleep.

Pieter felt one of the scratchy branches of the fir tree brush against his face and opening his eyes, he noticed bright lights shining a short distance from where he was lying. Brushing the snow from



his clothing, the boy struggled to his feet. Emerging from beneath the tree, the boy's eyes fell upon a sight which made him stop in his tracks. The fir tree was covered with brilliant lights: red, green, blue, gold and white lights. Snowbirds, singing happily, flew in a circle near the top of the tree which was crowned with a large, silver star. In the distance Pieter noticed a host of animals, including deer, rabbits, wolves and two huge bears, standing silently and gazing hypnotically at the shining lights. All about, the boy could hear beautiful voices raised in song, but when he tried to locate the singers, all that he could see were the animals and birds. Then, as Pieter watched, the star atop the tree rose upward in a pathway of light far into the sky. The voices grew louder and the lights became more radiant. Pieter believed that he had died and was presently standing within the gates of heaven.

"Pieter, Pieter Muller." One of the snowbirds had landed on Pieter's shoulder and was talking to him.

"Follow the Star of Christmas and you'll be able to find your home." A bird can't talk thought the bewildered boy. I must be dreaming.

"Believe me, Pieter. Follow the star and you'll be safe."

Suddenly, the bright lights disappeared, and everything was dark but for the shining star high above. The words of the snowbird flashed through the boy's weary mind. "Follow the star." With his head turned upward toward the heavens, Pieter began walking. The snow had stopped, and the night was cold and clear. Amid giant trees and the woeful howls of a faraway wolf, Pieter bravely walked in a path marked by the brilliant Star of Christmas. Soon, the vegetation became less dense, and the boy observed a number of flickering lights in the distance. Finally, he emerged from the forest, and far below he could see the smoke gently floating from the chimneys of the houses in the village. His heart began to beat wildly, and his whole body seemed to sigh with relief. The snowbird had been right. The star had led him to safety. He was no longer lost.

The hot chocolate burned a path from Pieter's mouth to his empty stomach. The heat from the fireplace was beginning to thaw his frostbitten cheeks, hands and toes, and the warm, dry pajamas felt very comforting against his chafed skin. He explained to his parents the fateful events which had occurred during the past twelve hours. As he talked, his mother and father looked at each other in disbelief, and Pieter realized that his adventure did sound like a fairy tale. Nevertheless, he insisted over and over that his story was true until finally, his mother said, "True or not, the important thing is that you are safe and

sound. You look very tired, Pieter. Why don't you go to bed?"

Pieter was tired, but before he climbed the ladder which led to the loft he asked, "Father, who found the yule log?"

"Hans Anderson found it. He's a deserving lad, and his parents could use the money. It's strange, but as long as I can remember, someone needy has always discovered the log. The legend must be true. Father Christmas always chooses the one most needy."

Pieter climbed into the loft, and before he jumped into bed, he glanced out the window in the corner of the loft. There, perched on the outer sill and bathing in the silvery light beaming down from the Star of Christmas, was the little snowbird.



"Merry Christmas, Pieter" it chirped. Despite the glass barrier Pieter heard his tiny friend. With a smile on his face and tears of happiness in his eyes, Pieter said, "Merry Christmas, little snowbird, Merry Christmas!"

In a final gesture of good-will, the snowbird flapped its wings as if to say goodbye and then flew up the aisle of light which led straight to the dazzling star high above. For some reason, Pieter wasn't disappointed because he hadn't found the yule log. As he climbed into bed and pulled the covers up to his neck, he realized that he had been given something which was worth more than a million yule logs. He had been given the gift of life. With this thought in mind, Pieter Muller closed his eyes and drifted into dreamless sleep.

Christmas

Christmas is decorating the tree
and white snow is all you can see
and Christmas is no school
but it's too cold to go swimming in a pool
Christmas is dead flowers
and snow instead of showers
Christmas is full of joy
but you have to be a good girl or boy
Christmas brings dead roses
and people get cold noses
you drink hot chocolate
and you get cold and wet
Christmas brings snow
and then the wind begins to blow.

Julie Worden
Grade Five
Barringer Road
First Prize

Christmas Is Long

Christmas Eve
is the longest
night of all,
lying in bed
it seems
minutes are hours
and seconds are minutes
waiting for the rooster's call.
Lying in bed
I think of
what I'm gonna get,
maybe a train set
maybe a game,
When it's time to get up
I'm down the stairs in a flash
Opening all my presents fast.

Mark Harris
Grade Five
Barringer Road
Second Prize

Christmas Day

On Christmas Day, at six o'clock,
My radio blares out with "Jingle Bell Rock"
I get out of my bed and walk down the
 stairs,
At the dozens of presents I simply stare!
When my family gets up, we have bacon &
 eggs,
While we wait for my relatives, Eric and
 Peg,
We then open our presents, the very best
 part,
My very first present is a homemade go-
 cart.

My mother got perfume, my father got
 tools,
My brother got pamphlets on bicycle rules,
I got five models, and a pinball machine,
A Tank Battle game, and a hiking canteen.

When morning is over, I play with my toys,
A feature of day that all children enjoy,
It's been a nice day, but it's no "field of
 clover"
I've waited three months, and now it's all
 over.

Robert Garnsey
Grade Five
Barringer Road

Christmas Morning

On Christmas morning we hop out of bed,
Pulling the covers from over our heads
We dump our stockings all over the floor.
And unwrap our presents we got from the
store.

Santa's elves have been working all night,
They sure are a tired sight.
They work all night and they work all day,
But they never get any pay.

Leslie Brewer
Grade Five
Barringer Road
Second Prize

Christmas

There is snow down town.
The girls are wearing stockings.
The boys are wearing slacks.
We will start to make stacks
Of wood and corn.
We sew all the things that are torn.
For Christmas is coming on its way
And we will be proud to say
That Jesus was born on this day.

Kate McKay
Grade Five
St. Francis
First Prize

Christmas

Christmas is a birthday
And everyone can come.
Everyone gets presents
And has a lot of fun.
But the party is for Jesus,
Mary's little Son.

Maria Blasting
Grade Five
St. Francis
Second Prize

Christmas

Presents, presents, everywhere.

In the cupboards, under the chair.

In the bathtub in the sink.

Oh my gosh, mine's wrapped in pink!

Tom Hegeman
Grade Five
St. Francis

A Christmas Tree

We turned a lot of corners, then stopped.
They took me in a very large door,
Into the parlor and stood me up.
And there I was so sad.

They put things on my arms,
And something on my head.
All of my arms felt very heavy,
That thing on my head was so shiny,
It was giving me splitting headaches,
I felt so sick and so very sad.
Those men are cruel I said to myself,
To chop somebody down.

It got dark and so still,
I fell asleep that night.
That next morning there was a bright glare.
In amazement I saw below me,
Boxes and paper and many things,
All huddled around me so strangely.
For what? That question was answered
soon,
For it was Christmas day.

Jim Callister
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas

Christmas through the eyes of a child.
A wonderful sight of bright lights.
Smiles and smiles throughout the house,
Even the little mouse
The presents all wrapped up in ribbons of
red,
All spread around the bright Christmas
tree,
Twinkling and shining with ornaments.
The snow is as white as white can be.
The leaves of the trees have fallen off,
And snow is piled upon the branches.
The roof of the house has icicles hanging
long and narrow.
A snowman with mittens and scarf, two
black eyes
Shining with happiness, a long carrot nose
that looks
Terribly cold, and a pipe sticking out of his
mouth.
That's what Christmas is through the eyes
of a
Child.

Deneen Muller
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas To Me

After I open all my presents and
think I can play with them,
What a bore it is washing and
sweeping the floor!
Then my brains feel like they
are going to wrinkle up when
Mom says, in a loud tone of
voice, "you had better clean up the table
too."

I take the knives, forks and spoons,
and with my luck the dishwasher breaks
down!

So I wash them by hand.
It feels like a band of Indians are
attacking my hands, then I trip
over my brother's dumb toy train
and plane.

Eric Paul
Grade Six
Barringer Road
Second Prize

Christmas Tree

There once was a Christmas Tree
Whom nobody wanted.
His leaves were falling off, too
Because he was getting so old.
Then someone found the lonely tree.
And they brought him to their home.
They gave him much water.
And he grew back to health.
Till he grew too high!
So they had to take him out.
They said, "We'll cut him down."
There was a boy who lived there.
He didn't want this to happen
So, at night, he took the tree out
And he planted him in the woods.
Everyday he sees him.
The tree is very happy.

Rudyard Edick
Grade Six
Barringer Road
First Prize

Christmas Is

Christmas is love, excitement
And fun,
Christmas is snowmen, sleds
And sun.

Christmas is ornaments, tinsel
And trees,
Christmas is candy canes,
Stockings and wreaths.

Christmas is family, dinner
And friends.
Christmas is cards that
Everyone sends.

The angel on top of our
Christmas tree,
The baby in the manger,
For you and me,
The stars that shine
In the sky above,
Give us all a feeling
Of great Love.

Regina Iagulli
Grade Six
Barringer Road

My Christmas Wishes

I wish I could have

A ten speed bike,

I wish I could have

A hamster.

I wish I could have

A lot of things,

I wish I could be

A Christian.

I wish Mom and Dad

Could have everything,

I wish we could be

Contented.

I wish we could be

Happy and gay

Like Jesus wanted

Us to be.

Debra Brigham
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Santa's Elves

I am the Elf. I am supposed to be
Jolly and nice. Do you think I like
All this ice?

It's not much fun, I'd like some sun.
It gets kind of cold up here.

Santa thinks he's the man,
I'd like to boot him right
In the can.

He thinks he's cool driving
That sled, half the
Year he's sleeping in bed.

Glenn Seaton
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas

A bundle is a funny thing,
It always sets me wondering:
For whether it is thin or wide you'll
Never know just what's inside.

Especially in Christmas week temptation
Is so great to peek!
Now wouldn't it be much more fun if
Shoppers carried things undone?

Michelle Seelbach
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas Is:

Christmas Is, visitors and carolers at
the door,
and so much much more.

Christmas Is, the crunch of footsteps
in the new snow,
and people under the
mistletoe.

Christmas Is, wrapping presents
with glee
and hearing the sleighbells
ring for you and me.

Christmas Is, holly on the wreath
to see,
and decorating the
Christmas tree.

Christmas Is, stockings hung over the
fireplace,
and presents all wrapped
with lace.

Christmas Is, being excited on Christmas
night,
and stories told by
candlelight.

Christmas Is, wondering if Santa
will appear,
and fill our stockings
with Christmas cheer.

Christmas Is, dinner for you and me,

and Santa's snack left
under the tree.

Christmas Is, a beautiful star
reminding us of the
wisemen who traveled
so far.

Christmas traditions around the world
vary,
but we all celebrate the
birth of Christ to Joseph
and Mary!

Lisa Ruff
Grade Six
Barringer Road
Second Prize

The Elves' Christmas

Christmas is a pain in the neck!
By the 'time we're through,
I am a wreck.
Elves make toys for girls and boys
When Santa brings them,
They jump for joy.
But nobody makes things for us elves;
We either get nothing,
Or we do it ourselves.
Santa Claus gives nice presents to all,
But he only gives us
A plain rubber ball!
Furthermore Santa gets all the praise,
But he doesn't have the decency
To give us a raise!
We all make toys day after day.
All Santa does
Is rest and play.
None of us likes it
It's too bad!
After all, we miss the things we
Could have had.
Well for now we'll just bear with it,
But Santa doesn't know
That one of these days,
We're all going to go!

Gina Coroniti
Grade Six
Barringer Road
First Prize

Christmas

Christmas morning is a happy time,
All the presents beneath the pine,
Wreaths hanging up on every door,
Children wishing for more, more, more.

JoEllen Bleaking
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas Time

Well St. Nicholas is on his way
The old familiar Christmas songs play
And wild and sweet
The words sometimes repeat.

Wendy Hall
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas

Oh I'm glad Christmas is here.
It has lots of Christmas cheer.
I'm afraid I won't get what I like.
Because I was a bad little tike.

Todd Allen Remis
Grade Six
Barringer Road

Christmas

C is for the carols we sing
H is for the happiness it brings
R is for the Roman king
I is for the wise man
S is for our newborn savior
T is for tinsel
M is for Jesus' mother
A is for God's angels
S is for Santa Claus

Kelly Renadin
Grade Six
St. Francis

Christmas

When Santa comes on Christmas Eve;
Sometimes presents he does leave.
If you are bad he will not come;
If you are good you might get some.
I have been good all these years;
He brought me lots of Christmas cheers.

Kelly Hegeman
Grade Six
St. Francis
Second Prize

Christmas

Bright Christmas stars shine on high,
Golden stars in the gleaming sky,
Christmas candles shining in the windows
bright

Send a greeting into the night
The infant Christ, the son of Mary, came
To bring good will and peace to the earth,
And light the Christmas flame.

Brian Murphy
Grade Six
St. Francis
First Prize

Christmas

There will be lots of fun for everyone
when Santa comes around
his sleigh will soar among the stars
and coast along the ground

Eileen Connor
Grade Seven
St. Francis
First Prize

Christmas

Christmas the most beautiful time of the
year,

A time of laughter, a time of cheer.

The snow covers everything like a blanket
to keep things warm,

Adults hope for a light snow while children
pray for a storm.

The Christmas tree is beautiful,

Pleasing to the eye.

Then an aroma fills the house, the smell of
pumpkin pie.

Cousins and aunts and uncles galore,

Barely room for a person more.

As the day comes to a close, our hearts are
filled with joy,

Each boy and girl has a trinket or a toy.

The snow is still falling like a blanket to
keep things warm;

Adults hoping for a light snow;

The children wishing for a storm.

Daniel Kirkpatrick
Grade Eight
St. Francis
First Prize

The Christmas Tree

We've finished decorating the Christmas
tree
and now as the night time falls
I just can't wait to turn on the lights
and see all the tinsel and balls.

Daddy and Mommy helped me put up the
tree—
in its holder it stands so tall—
The lights light up and my eyes light up
and I love everybody
like I had never loved them at all.

T. H. Barthel
Assoc. Prof.
HCCC

Full of Christmas

When I open my presents on Christmas,
it's like I am opening up me,
because when I empty the boxes
I fill up my heart with glee.

T. H. Barthel
Assoc. Prof.
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